

Mobile Baptist Association
Executive Committee Report

September 12, 2016

Brother Thomas Wright, Associational Missionary

Emphasizing Biblical Prayer. Evangelistic Ministries. Church Development. Church Planting. Partnership Missions

“Divide and Conquer”

Jesus and Paul recognized the Enemy has an easily discernable strategy. Satan plants divisive people in every congregation. Even the hand-picked Twelve were constantly bickering. And then there was Judas. So do not be surprised and overwhelmed. Be prepared and preemptive. And seek to walk with God that even we aren't lured into divisiveness. In the larger sense, it applies to churches cooperating with other churches. Divide and conquer is from Latin and used politically by the conqueror Philip of Macedon. It refers to a strategy that divides existing power structures, and especially prevents smaller groups from linking up, causing rivalries and fomenting discord among the people. Relationships are difficult to create and maintain. Cooperation is hard. But “May they also be one in us, so the world may believe You sent me.” John 17:21b

#PrayerWalkMobile

Prayer unites believers. Matthew 18:19 shows that cooperative prayer (“if two of you agree...”) brings devastating defeat to the enemy. The MBA Executive, Evangelism and Biblical Prayer Committees invite our churches to prayer walk every street in Mobile County between October 2016 and October 2017. The first simultaneous weekend will be January 14-15, 2017. Training details, registering and reporting are at prayerwalk.mobilebaptists.org and the hashtag #prayerwalkmobile.

Church Revitalization/Planter Training at West Mobile Baptist Church

Current research indicates 75% of SBC churches are plateaued or declining. Those national figures are consistent with Mobile County churches. Each of those churches would benefit from this training. It is very practical and provides pastors and lay leaders with information about starting and revitalizing churches. Taught by experienced church planters, it includes application to any congregation wanting to prevent or reverse decline. Time is included for attendees to discuss how to apply these ideas to their churches. The principles for new work apply to existing churches. The event **begins with lunch at noon Thursday, September 22, and ends Saturday at 4:30 p.m.** The \$25 cost includes a binder of practical materials, snacks and meals. (\$100 for non-Alabama Baptist Churches). It is worth the investment of time. Please register online at plantalabama.org/event/alabama-church-planting-basics-mobile.

May15-25, 2017 Team to Holy Land

The second mission team will go to Israel May 15-25, 2017. The team will serve at the IMB facility jerusalemprayercenter.com. The team will help local workers with guests, complete some repair projects, prayer walk and see the sights. Anticipated cost is \$3,000 per person including airfare, hotel, meals, local transportation and four days of guided tours. Four days will include peering into the empty tomb, strolling along the Sea of Galilee, standing in Capernaum and reading the Sermon on the Mount while seated on that mount. Team members will visit the Old City of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Dead Sea and many other biblical sites. A deposit of \$1,000 is due by January 3, 2017. The final payment is due by February 10. Contact Bro. Thomas if you wish to expand your understanding of scripture and help our workers there.

Disaster Relief Response and Preparation

Thank you for the significant response to flooding in Louisiana from MBA churches. Those efforts are ongoing for many more weeks. Please check in with the closest DR Command Center when your teams go. Please help the families and churches where you work to complete the DR request. Coordination of needs and teams is very difficult. Trained people are more helpful and safer. But, of course untrained people can be helpful. Please take this opportunity to encourage your people to attend a training, SBCCR.org.

Please take this reminder to be prepared for the next event in Mobile. The blessing of these quiet years can lull us into complacency. Please visit dr.mobilebaptists.org to remind yourself about the resources available to help us be prepared and involved. Remember our strategy is to get churches open promptly so they can serve as evangelistic ministry centers in communities. Please download and update the availability of your facilities as a feeding center, cooling station, housing, or for storing/distributing supplies.

2017 Budget Update

The Budget and Finance Committee has approved the Proposed 2017 MBA Budgets.

We have reduced the MBA budget \$159,256 since 2008. As you recall we lost \$54,000 in subsidies from NAMB for IM and CDD positions. Health insurance costs have increased \$26,000. We are being told to expect another significant insurance premium increase this coming year. We already have reduced the level of care we formerly provided for our employees to a plan with higher deductibles and more out of pocket expenses for the employees. We have reduced insurance costs by having a part time Director of International Ministries and a retired Interim Director of CWP. We have not been able to provide staff raises for the last seven years. We have reduced the MBA office work week to four ten-hour days. We are praying and working to sell both facilities and combine them into a more efficient facility with lower overhead expenses.

We would be in dire straits indeed if so many churches had not faithfully increased their missions giving to the MBA. We need additional churches to consider redistributing their missions tithe to the MBA. We average .91% of church missions' gifts coming to the MBA. Please discuss with your Finance Committee about increasing the MBA percentage of your church's missions tithe.

Future Focus Committee Update

Please do not forget to pray for the FFC, the needed gift of property and the timely sale of the two current facilities. Dr. Roy Stebbins and the committee continue to implement the vote of the 2014 Annual Session.

Please remind your people of the need and process to sell and combine the aging International Ministries Center and MBA office building. The committee is reviewing designs for streamlined and efficient use of the combined facilities in a new, central location. The design *decreases* facility size *and costs* by 4,501 sq. ft. The design *increases* meeting space, office space, work space, volunteer housing and Disaster Relief response capabilities. Obviously it is impossible without the Lord's intervention. It will require the active involvement of cooperative-minded, missions-oriented people. The minimum needed facility cost, currently at \$1.2 million dollars, exceeds the possible \$1 million dollars we might receive from the sale of the two facilities.

Pray particularly for the property. We still need the donation of at least 3.5 *buildable* acres in a location accessible to our churches and centrally located for effective seafarer ministry. This location needs quick access to I-65 or I-10. We recognize this is considered prime location requiring fervent prayer and generous donor(s). We will need the donation of materials, furnishings, labor and money. It is definitely a God-sized challenge that has been accepted through careful research and stewardship considerations.

Two Good Podcasts

SBC This Week is another weekly podcast with news from across the SBC. Southwestern Seminary podcasts of the chapel services present many well-known SBC leaders.

A Helpful Website

The cultural endorsement of aberrant lifestyles means increased diligence in our congregations. This helpful site alsbom.org/safe provides good guidelines about your responsibility to protect the privacy of church members and to protect children and members from predators.

Church Changes, New Pastors and Churches Seeking Pastors

Please pray for the churches seeking a pastor and please let us know when their statuses change: Cedar Creek, Faith Mobile, Gulfcrest, Higher Ground, Hope of the Nations, Citronelle Memorial, Semmes FBC, Seven Hills, Spring Hill and Trinity.

Orientation Guide for Church Staff and Churches Exploring MBA Membership

Please visit mobilebaptists.org for a copy of the Orientation and New Member Guide. It presents an overview of MBA ministries, staff, philosophy and strategy. It also includes a membership application for churches wishing to explore membership with the MBA. Please download a copy for your staff and share a copy with potential members.